

## Super Bowl 50 Spikes Interest in Sod vs Turf Debate

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The 2016 Super Bowl marks a turning point in N.F.L. history, as the world of sports wakes up to the environmental impact that watering the Levi's Stadium grass will have on a drought-stricken California.

Leading up to Super Bowl 50, all anyone can talk about are the numbers. 45: the number of touchdowns Cam Newton has scored this season. 71,940: the number of yards Peyton Manning has thrown over his 17 year career in the NFL. The big number to watch this year, though, isn't a player stat; it's the number 500,000. Wonder what this number represents? Not the total amount of cars that flooded the Bay Area this week. Not the total number of nachos fans will order in the stands. 500,000: that's how many gallons of water Levi's Stadium is estimated to spend on their real-grass field this month alone.

Levi's Stadium showcases their use of a reclaimed water system to combat wasted water during California's water crisis, and 85% of Levi's Stadium uses recycled water. That's a big step in the direction of sustainability, but by the math, that means the stadium still uses 75,000 gallons of fresh water, which isn't reclaimed or recycled. The water usage is due in part to the fact that this year's Super Bowl will be played on real grass, rather than artificial turf.

The N.F.L. has started to prefer synthetic turf, with 4 out of the 5 five Super Bowls being played on some type of synthetic turf. Artificial grass not only reduces water usage during its maintenance, which doesn't have the irrigation demands of real grass, but also during its installation. Last season, Levi's stadium had to replace their living sod after just one game, and typically continues to replace their field several times during the season. Each of those plantings costs money, and it costs gallons. Synthetic turf's durability is part of why it continues to gain traction as an eco-friendly solution for sporting arenas, within the N.F.L. and beyond.

Let's paint a picture of what going to the big N.F.L. game during this California drought is like for a Bay Area resident. Consider a fan's morning in action: you wake up and take a 2-minute water-saving shower, pass by your yard's dirt patch of a lawn because watering it would boost your usage and sap your bank account, then maybe you even drive to the game in your filthy car that has "wash me" written on the windows, because you know every bucket full of suds counts. Then, you get to the game, and get an eyeful of a field of fresh, living green grass. How many fans at Super Bowl 50 will wonder who's watering that lawn, and how?

While this Sunday the spotlight will be on Broncos vs Panthers, there's another set of teams for fans to choose from: Traditional Sod vs Synthetic Turf. Just like the majority of recent NFL Super Bowl stadiums, many drought-conscious sports fans are seeking artificial turf as a lawn solution, leading to growing demand on California synthetic grass companies like Watersavers Turf.

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